Code of Professional Behaviours - Our Behaviour Framework

Why do we need a Behaviour Framework?

Cottsway should be a positive and rewarding place to work. We know this enthusiasm rubs off on our customers and stakeholders, and we recognise the crucial role each and every member of staff plays in helping achieve our goals.

What is the Behaviour Framework?

A Behaviour Framework sets out **how** we are expected to work, alongside **what** we do in our roles. It describes the behaviours and attitudes expected of everyone at Cottsway.

Our purpose and values sit at the heart of this framework.

Our purpose is:

'Together we turn houses into homes, build stronger communities and make a positive difference to people's lives.'

Our values are:

- We are open and transparent about how we do business.
- We are here for the long term.
- We see Cottsway as a partnership between customers and staff and key stakeholders.
- We will do all we can to provide our customers with decent homes from which they can enhance their lives.
- We are part of, and value, the communities in which we work.

Our framework sets out the behaviours expected of all employees. It supports our values, shapes our culture and helps us deliver our Business Plan, Corporate Plan and day-to-day services.

This encourages us to go the extra mile and provide the high standard of service our customers, stakeholders and colleagues expect and deserve.

Our behaviours reflect the attitudes and approach we take to work every day.

They are known as the 4Ps:

- **P**lain speaking
- **P**ersonal
- **P**rofessional
- **P**ositive

These behaviours set out how we work, how we treat others, how we communicate and how we expect to be treated.

They apply to everyone at Cottsway, regardless of role or seniority. We also expect contractors and partners working on behalf of Cottsway to demonstrate behaviours that reflect the principles of this framework when delivering services to our customers and communities.

The framework groups each behaviour into three categories:

- **What we expect** - the behaviours expected of all employees
- **How we excel** – the behaviours we encourage employees to strive towards.
- **How we lead** - additional behaviours expected of managers and senior leaders.

Behavioural expectations will be discussed regularly during probation reviews, one-to-one meetings and Personal Development Reviews, helping everyone understand what is expected of them.

These behaviours are an important part of working at Cottsway. Where behavioural expectations are not met, issues will be addressed promptly and appropriately.

The 4 P's

Plain speaking

Use clear, everyday language and simple ways to get our message across, so everyone can understand and engage with us.

What we expect	• Communicate clearly and honestly without jargon or abbreviations. • Prepare ahead of time, know what you are going to say and how you are going to say it. • Keep it simple - convey your message clearly, concisely, and accurately. • Deliver your message with honesty and sincerity. • Be clear and direct while remaining respectful and considerate of others. • Recognise when acronyms or jargon create barriers to understanding or engagement and find ways to address this. • Explain difficult or sensitive messages with respect and compassion. • Keep emails and letters factual and to the point but maintaining a personable approach where appropriate. • Recognise the impact of nonverbal communication, this can often say more than words. • Use an appropriate tone, this can add power and emphasis to your message.
How we excel	• Check emails for tone and composition to ensure they cannot be misconstrued. • Show respect through your body language and tone of voice. • Choose the right medium to convey your message in the most effective way.
How we lead	• Provide feedback in a constructive way. • Be aware of body language and nonverbal cues, if you are aware of others' body language, you may be able to adjust your communication tactics appropriately.

How does this benefit Cottsway?

Cottsway will have staff that take ownership for all they do, think, and say which is vital to creating an environment of honesty, openness, and transparency - particularly when it comes to delivering great service to our customers.

When 'Plain speaking' is not demonstrated:

- Using jargon or complex wording.
- Waffling – wastes time and dilutes your message.
- Messages are misunderstood or misconstrued.
- Disengaged audience.
- An inappropriate tone can undermine a message.

Personal

Talk openly and directly to our customers, staff, and stakeholders as friendly, equal individuals.

What we expect	• Talk openly and directly to customers and stakeholders, take time to understand, do not make assumptions. • Commit personally to achieving a positive outcome. • Listen to understand before responding or deciding what to do next. • Recognise that people may have different needs, circumstances or health challenges and respond with understanding and empathy. • Find solutions and take action and take responsibility for your own thoughts, behaviours and performance. • Treat others with respect in all forms of communication. • Be patient and understanding, especially in difficult or stressful situations. • Play an active role in the success of your team and wider organisation. • Use personal language where possible, such as 'we' will and 'I' will rather than 'Cottsway' will.
How we excel	• Take ownership of your work and use your initiative to deliver organisational objectives and ambitions. • Show compassion and empathy, particularly when working under pressure. • Find solutions and keep leadership informed of outcomes or options.
How we lead	• Reward innovation and accept that mistakes and setbacks are a part of learning. • Create a respectful environment where people feel valued and heard. • Communicate openly, honestly and in a transparently encouraging two-way communication. • Have difficult conversations when necessary whilst always treating others with respect. • Coach others to identify opportunities and solutions. • Maintain a visible presence and encourage challenge and discussion.

How does this benefit Cottsway?

Cottsway will have staff that are always acting in the best interests of the organisation and consistently operating to the best of their ability. By doing this we maintain high standards, showing integrity and fairness in dealings with colleagues, partners and customers.

When 'Personal' is not demonstrated:

- Putting personal interest or opinion above that of others.
- Withholding your knowledge and experience from others to prevent change.
- Choosing a working method or environment that is most convenient only for you.
- Makes assumptions about what customers or colleagues want and need rather than open listening and communicating.
- Failing to work as part of a team.

Professional

Take real pride in what we achieve, without being stuffy, formal, or officious.

What we expect	• Demonstrate drive and accountability for great performance and delivery of results. • Resolve problems quickly in a positive and friendly manner. • Be clear about where you can be flexible and where you cannot and why. • Deliver on your promises and communicate when you can't. • Manage your time effectively. • Distinguish between important and urgent tasks and prioritise effectively, even from apparently equal demands. • Identify opportunities to improve existing working practices or suggesting new ones.
How we excel	• Show pride in your work and in working for Cottsway. • Recognise others' contributions to the achievement of objectives. • Train and support colleagues where required. • Challenge unacceptable behaviours, negativity or cynicism about organisational standards and behaviour.
How we lead	• Set clear team objectives and expectations. • Support the objectives of the organisation and seek potential opportunities to improve. • Assess risks and act accordingly. • Create an environment of trust and collaboration across all teams. • Evaluate the success of projects and disseminate lessons that can be learned.

How does this benefit Cottsway?

Cottsway will have staff with planned and organised workloads where they ensure that deadlines are met within resource constraints, thus consistently meeting objectives and success criteria.

When 'Professional' is not demonstrated:

- Being disorganised.
- Focusing only on the task, without considering best for the customer.
- Losing sight of goals and targets.
- Ignoring problems, delaying your response or failing to update others without reason.
- Managing your time poorly and failing to deliver what is expected of you.
- Working in a way that has little regard for cost or the efficient use of resources.
- Criticising colleagues and / or customers behind their backs or blaming others for mistakes.

Positive

Always seek a way forward and be honest about any problems.

What we expect	• Demonstrate a positive regard towards everyone. • Be open and receptive to other views and perspectives. • Trust, respect, support and be honest with the people you work with. • Adapt to changing priorities, customer needs and organisational requirements and be receptive when change happens. • Own your mistakes, learn from them and do what you can to put things right. • Overcome setbacks and disappointments quickly and constructively. • Demonstrate a positive 'can do' attitude even when working under pressure.
How we excel	• Be open to having your performance and ideas challenged and be able to challenge others constructively. • Be adaptable to change and understand its impact on customers, the business and yourself.
How we lead	• Be a role model and coach others in best practice. • Recognise others' strengths and promote benefits of collaborative working. • Create an environment of learning and collaboration, including where staff admit and learn from mistakes.

How does this benefit Cottsway?

This creates energy and motivation and aids problem solving and decision making. Cottsway will have staff who are thinking positively and engaging those around them which has a positive effect on the atmosphere and culture of the organisation, thus creating a better place to work.

When 'Positive' is not demonstrated:

- Closing down others by being judgemental, interrupting, talking over them or not asking their opinion.
- Putting up barriers to different or new ways working.
- Discouraging change from happening because 'this is how it's always been done'.
- Demoralised and disengaged staff.
- Failing to work as a team.

How we use our Behaviour Framework

Your working day

You will demonstrate these behaviours every day through your actions and interactions with others. We expect you to be consistent in how you work, take time to reflect and learn when things go wrong, and seek help when you are unsure. You will support colleagues by working together, sharing knowledge and recognising success. By bringing your best self to work, you contribute to positive outcomes for our customers, colleagues and communities.

Recruitment and selection process

We recruit people who demonstrate our behaviours as well as the skills and experience required for the role. Behaviour-based interview questions help us assess both job fit and cultural fit.

Performance management

Everyone is responsible for both what they achieve and how they achieve it. Staff are encouraged to seek feedback, reflect on their behaviours and performance, and identify opportunities for growth and development.

Development

The Behaviour Framework supports personal development and career progression. Behavioural expectations form part of regular discussions, helping identify strengths, development needs and future opportunities.